THE PARTY BUILDER
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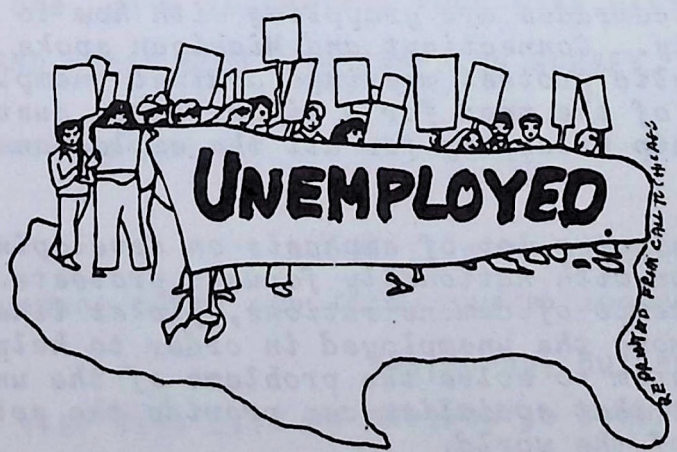
Organizing the Unorganized

Special Party Conference

On April 23rd, over a hundred Party activists from coast to coast met in Chicago in a national conference on Work Among the Unemployed. As quickly as the room filled up that Saturday morning, you got a taste of the excitement that was a basic feature of the conference. Even before you got to hear some of the experiences from around the country, you knew that the Party was deeply involved in the survival struggles of the unemployed.

Someone early in the day noted that the conference was taking place one year to the day after the Party's Extraordinary Conference in Milwaukee. Many of us had been in the Milwaukee Conference workshop on work among the unemployed, and here we were a year later in a gathering of comrades and freinds that was dramatic proof that the Party is leading and participating in movements that speak for hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers.



As one of the conference participants noted, the conference was a clear expression of our Party's vanguard role and capability. We said in Milwaukee that it was our responsibility to our class to help launch a movement of the unemployed. History will say that Milwaukee was a catalyst that helped move millions into militant mass action and organization.

Keynoted by George Meyers, Chair of the National Labor Dept. of the Party, the conference brought forward a wide variety of experiences and approaches to the survival struggles of the unemployed. Conferees pointed out the need for flexibility. In many cases people would start working on one issue only to find that an entirely different issue sparked mass action and protest. Many related their concrete experiences involving both trade union and neighborhood unemployment committees.

A highlight of the conference was a report on organizing among the farmers. Militant national farm organizations are developing. Tractor parades, penny sales tactics and a farmer's protest of sending underwear to the White House (we're losing our shorts) and other creative mass actions are being organized by the farmers.

Most of those present pointed to rising moods of militancy among those we are working with. Some said they had a hard time getting unemployed people to meetings but could get plenty of people to a demonstration or a picket line. Several suggested that groups that meet on the same night of the week, every week, get best attendance. Others talked about overwhelming responses to single leaflets calling for action. Success was reported when people were asked to bring their cutoff notices to the meetings and direct action was planned to stop the cutoffs.

The conference developed some important ideological points about this area of work. We noted that there will be no big recovery in the near future and that the ruling class seems perfectly willing to accept high levels of unemployment throughout the eighties. Comrades pointed out that capitalism is not about to sit back and let the unemployed movement develop unchallenged. We said that the three main points of attack would be anti-unionism, racism and anti-communism, and people gave specific examples of these problems in unemployed organizations.

Many areas stressed the need for more break-throughs in building the Party among unemployed workers. Many spoke of the new attitudes they encounter in the use of the Daily World. The special unemployed issues have gotten particularly good responses at the unemployed offices. And it was proposed that the Party adopt the slogan: "Every unemployment office and welfare office a Daily World reading room!"

In many areas comrades are grappling with how to project the public presence of the Party. Connecticut and Michigan spoke of their experiences in holding public protest meetings against unemployment. There was a lot of discussion of the need for a bigger Party just to be able to provide the leadership necessary for all the explosions of spontaneous protest emerging.

The conference put a lot of emphasis on developing more cohesive forms of organization with nationally focused protests. There is a need for increased tempo of demonstrations, picket lines, sit-ins, etc. The Party must be among the unemployed in order to help reveal the inability of the system to solve the problems of the unemployed workers. We have to point out that socialism can provide the solution and has done so in a third of the world.

The conference also took note of the increasing use of unemployed workers as bargaining chips for concessions in union contracts. At some unemployed offices people are asked to work in struck plants and

threatened with being cut off if they refuse to scab.

The conference showed that the movement is developing rapidly and is becoming a basic challenge to the system. We focused our work, got an overview of how the movement is developing and left ready to increase our efforts to lead and build the fightback movement against unemployment.

--By a conference coordinator

* * *

WHAT DO THESE FIGURES MEAN TO YOU?

☆ **500,000**

☆ **100,000**

☆ **3,000**

☆ **1,000**

If you knew each one, give yourself a FOUR-STAR rating in the SUPER HIGH-TECH PARTY AND PRESS BUILDING CAMPAIGN SURVEY.

All others, see answers below:

* 500,000 is the amount of dollars to be raised for the Daily World high-tech innovations.

* 100,000 is the weekly circulation goal for the drive.

* 3,000 is the number of workers we will talk with face-to-face during the drive.

* 1,000 is the number of new Party and Young Communist League members we will recruit.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Listed below are some slogans for the drive for new members (part of the Party and Press-Building Drive).

All are to be followed by: JOIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY!

TO BE A BETTER FIGHTER,
YOU CAN FIGHT CITY HALL AND THE WHITE HOUSE.

AGAINST POVERTY. WE CAN WIN JOBS
RACISM EQUALITY
WAR PEACE

MAKE THE COUNTRY WORK FOR THE PEOPLE, NOT THE RICH!

TAKE A GIANT STEP, BEAT THE SYSTEM.

U.S.A. -- FOR THE WORKING PEOPLE!

TIRED OF CRUMBS, GO FOR THE WHOLE PIE!

TAKE A STAND AGAINST CORPORATE RIP-OFFS!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE IT, FIGHT BACK!

REAL ROAD TO RECOVERY...

THERE IS A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS! GO FOR IT!

CLAIM THE FRUITS OF YOUR LABOR!

THIS COUNTRY IS OUR COUNTRY!

GET DOWN TO BASICS --
IF YOU CARE ABOUT OUR PEOPLE,
PUT THE COUNTRY BACK ON TRACK.
THE PARTY.....FOR THE WORKING PEOPLE!

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS!

PUT YOUR ANGER INTO ACTION!

COMMUNIST PARTY -- THE WINNING EDGE

THERE'S SOCIALISM IN YOUR FUTURE!

HALT BIG BUSINESS RIP OFF,
TIRED OF BEING BEATEN BY THE SYSTEM?

MAIL TO: NATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEPT., CPUSA, 235 W. 23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10011

I like _____

My idea for a good slogan is: _____

_____

How to Make a DW/Voz Route an Avenue for Recruitment

CONNECTICUT --"THE PARTY HELPS YOU BECOME A BETTER FIGHTER," I SAID, EMPHATICALLY GESTURING WITH A CLENCHED FIST. "THE CPUSA WORKS HARD AT BUILDING THE MULTI-RACIAL, MULTI-NATIONAL WORKING CLASS UNITY NEEDED TO BEAT BACK THE CUT-BACKS AND DEFEAT THE REAGANITES."

HESITATING FOR A MOMENT, I FINALLY GOT TO THE PUNCH LINE, "WE'D LIKE YOU TO JOIN."

UNHESITATINGLY, MY FRIEND SAID, "WELL, I THINK IT'S TIME FOR THAT."

"WOW! IT WORKED!" I SCREAMED TO MYSELF.

THE ABOVE OCCURRED IN JANUARY 1983, BUT THE STORY ACTUALLY BEGINS IN APRIL 1982.

AT THAT TIME MY CLUB DECIDED ON AN EIGHT MONTH ELECTORAL FOCUS. AN INCUMBENT STATE REPRESENTATIVE WITH A REAGANIT PROGRAM, WHOSE DISTRICT INCLUDED A WARD WITH A LONG-ESTABLISHED DAILY WORLD AND VOZ DEL PUEBLO ROUTE, WAS UP FOR RE-ELECTION. OUR CLUB CONFERENCE DEVELOPED A PLAN OF WORK:

--TO REACH OUT IN THE CONCENTRATION NEIGHBORHOOD WARD TO THOSE HARDEST HIT BY THE ECONOMIC CRISIS BY

1. EXPANDING THE EXISTING DW/VOZ ROUTE (JUNE TO SEPTEMBER, 2 COMRADES)

2. REGISTERING 12 NEW VOTERS FROM AMONG OUR CONTACTS (SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER, 2 COMRADES)

3. HELPING A GRASS ROOTS ECONOMIC FIGHTBACK GROUP TO SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFEATING THE REAGANITE INCUMBENT THROUGH AN ISSUE-ORIENTED, ANTI-MONOPOLY CAMPAIGN (2 COMRADES)

4. RECRUITING, WITH EMPHASIS ON UNEMPLOYED, BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN WORKERS (ALL COMRADES).

THE PLAN SPELLED OUT SPECIFIC TARGET DATES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. WE HAD HAD SUCH PLANS BEFORE. THEY HAD RESULTED IN ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN NEIGHBORHOOD STRUGGLES AND A CONSISTENT DW/VOZ ROUTE. HOWEVER, WHILE SOME RECRUITMENT HAD TAKEN PLACE CITYWIDE, WE HAD RECRUITED NO ONE FROM THE CONCENTRATION NEIGHBORHOOD.

FOR MOST OF OUR NINE YEARS, WE HAD REMAINED A COMMUNITY CLUB WITH COMRADES FROM FOUR DIFFERENT TOWNS, WITH NO NATIONALLY OPPRESSED MEMBERS.

WHILE THE DW/VOZ ROUTE WAS DONE WEEKLY, THERE WAS A TENDENCY TO "SKIP OVER" DOING WORK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD ON THE "BIG ISSUES" AND GO

CITYWIDE. THIS RESULTED IN GREATLY DILUTING OUR IMPACT. WE CONSTANTLY CAME IN CONTACT WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE DEPENDING ON THE ISSUE. WHILE THIS HAD ITS POSITIVE SIDE, IT ALSO MADE US APPEAR INCONSISTENT.

WE WERE DETERMINED, THIS TIME, TO STAY IN THE CONCENTRATION NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF THE PLAN.

--WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN WINNING TEN NEW READERS TO THE DW/VOZ ROUTE ROUTE.

--EIGHT NEW VOTERS WERE REGISTERED OUT OF NINE CONTACTS APPROACHED TO REGISTER.

--WE ASKED THE NEW READERS IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSION ABOUT REAGANOMICS. ONE AGREED: AN UNEMPLOYED, SINGLE PARENT, AFRO-AMERICAN WOMAN.

ARTICLES FROM WORLD MAGAZINE AND THE DAILY WORLD ON ISSUES SUCH AS FREE ENTERPRISE ZONES, INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND "ZERO" OPTION WERE USED TO KICK OFF THE DISCUSSIONS.

OUR NEW CONTACT BECAME INVOLVED IN A TENANTS STRUGGLE. OUR DISCUSSIONS BEGAN TO TAKE UP IMMEDIATE HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES IN THE 16 FAMILY BLOCK WHERE THE MEETINGS WERE BEING HELD.

A VISIT BY THE BLOCK TENANTS AND TENANTS UNION ORGANIZERS FROM A CITYWIDE TENANTS UNION TO THE ABSENTEE LANDLORD'S PLACE OF BUSINESS RESULTED IN SOME CONCESSIONS ON THEIR PROBLEMS.

OUR NEW FRIEND JOINED A MONTH LATER.

BOUYED BY SUCCESS, TWO WEEKS LATER WE RECRUITED AN UNEMPLOYED PUERTO RICAN WORKER WHO HAD BEEN ON OUR ROUTE FOR SEVEN YEARS!

CHANGING OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS, EXPERIENCE, "STICK-TO-ITNESS," CONCENTRATION AND THE MATERIAL FROM THE GUS HALL RECRUITING TOUR WERE THE BASES FOR THE BREAKTHROUGH.

THE MAIN GOAL FOR THE COMING SPRING MONTHS IS A NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB.

OH YEAH, THAT REAGANITE STATE REPRESENTATIVE WAS DEFEATED!

--FROM A CONNECTICUT COMRADE

CRYPTOGRAM

E R H V T K E K H W G T R L J N H W H M I E

F L M M H F J G U H K W L K E P E R C G T J E R C

F L M M H F J G U H E P G J E J L W G J G T E M T L E

F L M M H F J G U H L W P E R G Y H W M H R G R

L. YPTOGRAM: IN THE LAST ANALYSIS THE PROPERTY OWNING CLASS IS LOYAL ONLY TO ITS PROPERTY. -- JOHN REED

A PARTY CLUB ON THE MAP

The article below and the one on the next page occupied the whole left side of page 3 of Tacoma, Washington's largest newspaper, THE NEWS TRIBUNE on May 7. What generated all this publicity? A Party-club sponsored protest rally on the question of unemployment. Marj Sutherland was the spokesperson for the club and Franklin Alexander was the featured speaker at the rally.

The next issue of Party Builder will feature how this Party club organized this successful protest meeting.

Local Communist tells what her party is about

By NANCY BARTLEY

She calls herself "highly patriotic," although her style of love for country is a shade to the left of the traditional red, white and blue. Marj Sutherland, 41, is a Communist.

Sutherland is a slim woman; she was dressed in slacks and a bright Hawaiian print shirt, silver chains and earrings that swung as she spoke. She is a mother of a 21-year-old daughter, is separated from her husband, works as a registered nurse, lives in a downtown apartment, raises houseplants and organizes meetings for the Pierce County Communist Party Club, of which she is a member.

How many others there are in the club, she will not say. There is a state law prohibiting involvement in any organization labeled as subversive, and citing that law, she will give few details about the group.

She refused to be photographed during *The News Tribune* interview, saying she is "camera shy," not afraid of persecution for her beliefs.

"Of course, there has been a history of harassment by those in power," she said.

But the publicity-shy membership does, however, meet every few weeks.

"You find anybody in the party . . . young white, black old, professional workers, industrial workers, students, unemployed, teachers, retired people — everyone but corporate executives," she said. "We're a growing party.

"The Communist Party was founded in this country 63 years ago, and there has been a Communist Party Club in this area all that time ... We have no headquarters, but that is certainly in our plan," she said.

The headquarters probably will be a bookstore — "somewhere we can talk about our ideas," she said.

Sutherland was raised in Tacoma and Seattle in a working class family. Her father is a carpenter, and her mother has worked as a bookbinder and in restaurants.

"I grew up seeing the economic inequality of this country," she said. "I was introduced to Marxism and Leninism in high school through what was then the Labor Youth League — a Marxist youth league."

It is no longer in operation, but others have taken its place. And they do not necessarily preach a one-size-fits-all brand of Communism.

Communism in this country would have a unique American character and would not necessarily be a blueprint of Communism as it is in the Soviet Union, Sutherland said.

"We do not want to overthrow the (United States) government by force and violence. We do want to see a socialist reorganization of the country," she said.

A change from capitalism to Communism will come naturally, she believes.

"You can see it happening on a world scale ... but it can't happen unless the majority wants it," Sutherland said.

"In the meantime, many things need to be done to make life survivable and livable. All those who work for a living ... are under a lot of stress now, worrying about layoffs, prices going up.

"I do love this country ... I traveled across it by train. I could feel the beauty of this country and the wonderful people in it. Yet we should be able to provide a decent standard of living for all who live here," she said.

"We need to fight back against Reaganomics."

There is a lot more interest in Communism during hard economic times, she said. And the organization urges the unemployed to unite.

While going door to door distributing fliers about a party meeting, Sutherland met an unemployed woman who walked from her downtown residence over 20 miles round trip to apply for a housekeeping position at Western State Hospital. The woman did not have bus fare.

"Why not make Pierce County Transit free for the unemployed and elderly. How are they supposed to look for work without transportation?"

Communism is humanitarianism, and that does not preclude individual freedom, she maintains.

"Our party position is that it makes individual freedom possible. I am no particular faith, but many people of our party are," she said. "We are not in a struggle with God. We are in a struggle with capitalism."

Staff photo by BRUCE KELLMAN

California Communist leader Franklin Alexander

Chicago mass gathering aimed at money for jobs

By ED COSTELLO

A mass meeting of the nation's unemployed has been scheduled for July 4 in Chicago and the chairman of California's Communist Party Black Liberation Commission was in Tacoma to promote it.

Franklin Alexander, who is also coordinator of the South Central Unemployed Council in Los Angeles, addressed a public meeting last night in the Wright Park Senior Center.

At an afternoon press conference, Alexander said that such a meeting could help convince lawmakers to re-examine their priorities and channel into jobs the "millions and trillions" of dollars that are being earmarked for defense.

He cited as a precedent for such a meeting's success a similar march on Chicago in the depth of the Great Depression. It was this meeting, he said, which led to the establishment of Social Security and the other measures that extricated the country from the Depression.

Admitting that World War II was a major factor in providing that era's much needed jobs, Alexander said that "a third world war would be suicide and an unacceptable solution to today's joblessness."

Rather, he said, jobs to restore the nation's well-being and self-respect could be financed by diverting money from "the military sinkhole."

Until that could be effected, Alexander advocated providing for basic survival needs by providing free bus transportation for the unemployed, declaring a moratorium on utility shutoffs, providing free child care and banning evictions of the jobless and persons on low fixed incomes.